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ABSTRACT

The clinical faculty role is a new role for supervising or cooperating teachers that has evolved in the Division of Teacher Education at Western New Mexico University, producing dramatic changes in the design of the student teaching field experience. Clinical faculty are master teachers who supervise student teachers during their field experiences. The university's staffing process changed in order to facilitate recruitment of qualified clinical faculty: (1) clinical faculty are paid $700 per semester per student teacher; (2) criteria for clinical faculty are collaboratively devised, in partnership with the public schools; and (3) clinical faculty are required to enroll in an instructional supervision seminar, "Collegial Coaching," a vital component of the clinical faculty program. During these seminars, clinical faculty members share strategies about teaching and learning and methods of collegial interaction with their students teachers. Coaching is also a critical element of the clinical faculty member's interaaction with student teachers. The conceptual foundation of the supervision program incorporates principles found in adult learning theory, reflective practice theory, and systems theory. (Contains 18 references.) (IAH)

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Toward Quality Field Experiences: The Role of Clinical Faculty

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Toward Quality Field Experiences: The Role of Clinical Faculty

The professionalization of teaching was the hot topic of reform proposals of the 1980s. The proposals focused on the preparation of teachers, the evaluations of teaching, and the roles of teachers in school -wide decision-making. As a society we have put the lowest premium on talent and sensitivity in the profession which is the most vital to our people's mental health (Ferguson, 1980). Teacher preparation programs have been largely traditional, behavioristic, and content-oriented. The teaching organization has been bureaucratic. Since the 1980s reform movement, e.g., Carnegie Forum, 1986, Holmes Group, 1986, National Governor's Association, 1986, to name a few, the professional conception of teaching has placed emphasis on the teacher. Now, in the 1990s, the emphasis has not only been placed on the teacher, but also on the more salient topics of: (1) teacher as life long learner; and (2) professional development with continuous teacher involvement.

The initial preparation of teachers is the place where universities can make their most important long-range contribution to human resource development. It is also where universities have the strongest obligation. Sadly, this domain has been greatly ignored according to some observers. The university's challenge in the next decade is to connect two major areas that are critical to teacher preparation -- the university classroom and the field experience. In order for prospective teachers to become more reflective and analytical about their learning and about research-based teaching practice, universities must create new structures and new roles (Arends, 1990). A new structure for field experiences and for the role of the supervising teacher has evolved in the Division of Teacher Education at Western New Mexico University.

Going beyond the facilitation of technical skills, the role of the supervising teacher at Western New Mexico University has become a multi faceted one. It is a role of educational leadership in the classroom. it is a way of modeling good teaching; a way of supervising that provides student teachers with opportunities for systematically studying and reflecting on their developing practice. It is a collegial role, and it is an advisory role. It is a role called *Clinical Faculty*.

The underlying assumption of the Clinical Faculty role is that the

role engages in those dynamics which are viewed as working *with* the student teachers as colleagues -- not working *on* them. Master teachers tapped for Clinical Faculty can learn from student teachers who come to them presumably with the most current practices in teaching and learning. Collegial Coaching seminars provide the climate for stimulating interaction whereby Clinical Faculty share strategies about teaching and learning as well as tactics for supporting and challenging their student teachers in a collegial fashion.

Conceptual Underpinnings

Adult Learning Theory

Effective supervision is basically a learning process. The research on adult learning is particularly instructive when we look at how to relate to adults involved in the process of supervision. In the application of adult learning theory to supervision, Knowles (1980) provides four assumptions that underlie and direct the efforts of those who facilitate adult learning. These assumptions are: (1) Self -concept: Supervisoory processes should recognize adults as autonomous and self-directing; (2) Experience: Adults have rich backgrounds which can be brought into the application of problem-solving strategies; (3) Readiness for learning: Adults' readiness for learning is contingent upon where they are in their professional path, therefore, the act of supervision must be sensitive to the perceptions of those being supervised; and (4) Time perspective: Adults' involvement in developmental activities will vary according to the immediacy of application of newly acquired abilities and insights. Adults will be committed to supervision which will give them meaningful results in the here and now or in the short term.

The focus on Collegial Coaching in the seminars for the Clincal Faculty demonstrates attention to the first two underlying assumptions advanced by Knowles. Self-concept and Experience are recognized in the seminars as Clinical Faculty pool their knowledge, experiences, and insights. For the Clinical Faculty who have not had student teachers, they are acutely ready to learn how to supervise. For those who are veteran teachers who have supervisied many student teachers, the opportunity to share ideas and concerns, solve problems, and create appropriate evaluative instruments in a supportive, collaborative atmosphere meet the last two assumptions in adult learning theory.

Reflective Practice Theory

Argyris and Schon (1974) found that professionals, through interaction, create designs for their behaviors. They come to develop a theory of their practice -- this becomes a theory in action. It includes values, beliefs, strategies that guide and support what professionals say and do. At this level the theory-in-use is manifested by the professionals behavior. Only through a process of reflection on one's practice can the theory-in-use be evaluated, modified, revealed, and tested.

Clinical Faculty and their intern teachers are revealing their "theories-in-use." The Faculty role is that of a model to the apprenticed teachers who check, compare, and contrast their own developing theories, and eventually reveal or demonstrate their theory -in-action. Depending on underlying values of the "theories-in-action," professional behavior can be seen as "single-loop learning" or "double-loop learning" as referred to by Argyris and Schon (1978).

Single-loop learning focuses on the achievement of organizational goals as the individual perceives them, the enhancement of winning, and the decreasing of losing. This appears to be a maintenance model whereby the energy is directed to controlling external forces and gaining extrinsic rewards.

Double-loop learning, on the other hand, focuses on the attaining of valid information, the making of free choices, and in being committed to on-going evaluation. Certainly, the Clinical Faculty program expends some energy on the controlling of external forces, but it raises the importance of the flexibility of program design with an on-going evaluation of the model as well as in supporting free choices of the Clinical Faculty in daily supervision. These processes are continually evaluated by the Faculty. A major responsibility of the university professor is to structure the seminars to meet the needs of the Faculty, and to provide current knowledge and research for the Faculty.

The reflective professional is engaged in an on-going process of learning. According to Peterson and Comeaux (1989), not only is the reflective professional engaged in "learning to learn" and in "higher-order learning," but also inspires and facilitates this higher-order learning in her students. The image of the reflective professional defines the teacher in terms of the kind and quality of the decision making and judgment in which the teacher engages, not just in terms of her behaviorial competencies. Hence, it is important to share mechanisms by which

Clinical Faculty can reflect on teaching and learning in their own realm, thus modeling the process as well as providing reflective feedback to the intern teacher.

Systems Theory

From a systems perspective, Senge (1990) describes a simulation called the "Beer Game" -- a production/distribution system which provides lessons in systems' theory. He concludes that most players view their job as "managing their position" in isolation from the rest of the system. He maintains that what is required is to see how their position interacts with the larger system. As in other systems, in order for each person to succeed, others must succeed as well. Clinical Faculty begin to see how their postions interact with the larger system of the teacher education program, research and development in teaching and learning, and their own professional growth through modeling and supervision.

Clinical Faculty Program Design

Envisioned by Dr. Art Dowell, Director of the Division of Teacher Education, the Clinical Faculty Program required dramatic changes in the design of the student teaching field experience. In order to attract qualified Clinical Faculty to meet higher expectations of the program, the university changed the staffing process. It was proposed that $700.00 per semester per student teacher be paid to the Clinical Faculty. A collaborative approach to establish criteria for Clinical Faculty in partnership with the public schools was a second change in the process. And third, the Clinical Faculty would be required to enroll in an Instructional Supervision Seminar, "Collegial Coaching," each semester a student teacher was assigned to them. These proposals were accepted by the President of the university, and the program was implemented in the Fall semester of 1992.

Goals

Goals of the program are (1) To support teachers, inividually and collectively, in becoming more professionally autonomous and responsible for their development; (2) To assist teachers at whatever level of their development in becoming more reflective and analytical as they learn from their own teaching and from their colleagues; and (3) To expand and shift ways that teachers think about teaching and learning from exposure

to research findings and theoretical literature (Zumwalt, 1986).

Process

The Director of Field Experiences conducts the one credit hour Collegial Coaching seminars. Two to three hour seminars are heid approximately six times during the semester. The seminar discussions are based on exhibitions of exemplary teaching including video tapes, lesson planning, descriptions of outcomes, and other methods of demonstration of important teaching processes. Methods of supervisory practice are a critical component of the seminar. The university professor, the Clinical Faculty, and the Intern teachers model exemplary teaching in the classroom. Seminar topics have included developing profiles of exemplary teaching, questioning strategies, learning styles, communication, clinical supervision, research in effective teaching behaviors, classroom management, proactive behavior, team building, change, outcome-based education, evaluative instrument design, rubric development, and equal response opportunities for students.

At the first seminar, Clinical Faculty develop profiles of exemplary teaching. The essential question is asked: "What do we want our Intern teachers to look like at the end of this semester?" Four separate groups are formed from the True Colors Program (Lowry, 1989). The groups' task is to create profiles which are then correlated with the most current research in teaching and learning. Ten to twelve teaching behaviors, interactions, or characteristics are distilled from the profiles and current research. These descriptors may vary slightly from semester to semester as new Clinical Faculty members enter and others leave. Interestingly, the profiles are very close to research findings in teaching and learning.

The next question is asked: "How do we get our intern teachers to look like the profiles?" Strategies generated from the four groups are compiled for the next seminar. At separate seminars, the student teachers develop similar profiles, however, their focus is on their own personal profiles and goals for the field experience.

From the profiles and the strategies, the Clinical Faculty developed a Teaching Rubric during the fall semester of implementation. Twelve teaching behaviors and interactions with observable indicators evolved from a study of the research in teaching and learning. The instrument is used as the summative evaluative instrument. At mid-term the Clinical Faculty provide the interns with a brief written narrative reflecting on their growth in the teaching behaviors and strategies. Sharing a variety

of ways to provide such feedback through coaching techniques is a major component of the seminars.

Coaching

The coaching process is part of the Collegial Coaching seminars, that are, in essence, professional development seminars. Within the culture of independent collegiality, teachers reflect on the acts of teaching, learning, and supervising.

As student teachers prepare and teach weekly class lessons, the Clinical Faculty are required to give reflective feedback a minimum of three hours each week. Many Clinical Faculty and student teacher teams engage in an ongoing dialogue of ten or fifteen minute blocks during lesson preparation, immediately after lessons, or after school. Teams have found even two-minute interactions throughout the day to be powerful as they provide a laser-like focus on issues. This formative feedback loop is a daily interaction and utilizes the common forty-eight elements of instruction valued by educators. Also included are equal response opportunities for students learned from the Teacher Expectations Student Achievement (TESA) model (Kerman, 1980).

Schon (1987) describes coaching in the student teaching experience as a practice which allows for greater experimentation and reflection than in the first year of teaching. Since the coach, the Clinical Faculty, is more knowledgeable and can offer guidance in the learning experience, a reflective transformation of experience can occur. Reflective transformation requires some aspect of experimentation in which practitioners attempt to create meaning out of a problematic teaching situation.

In active collaboration, the student teacher learns through interaction with the Clinical Faculty who provides cues about the school culture, models behaviors, and interprets events and interactions. In this manner, the Clinical Faculty builds bridges which occur in what Vygotsky (1978) calls the "zone of proximal development." This zone is described as the mental distance or space between a person's current problem-solving ability and the ability the person can achieve if coached. Through a proactive position, the Clinical Faculty shares different perspectives and divergent ideas. Engaging in deep structure dialogue, new and creative solutions emerge as well as growth for the Clinical Faculty and the student teacher. Colton & Sparks (1992) describe a similar process in restructuring student teaching experiences. Conclusions drawn from their work reveal that coaches need to (1) become more conscious of their

own thinking and become more self-directed, (2) clearly explain their thinking, and (3) promote thoughtful, self-directed behavior in others. Clinical Faculty learn to address these issues through sharing and reflecting in the Collegial Coaching seminars.

Cognitive Coaching (Costa & Garmston, 1988) involves asking nonjudgmental, open-ended questions that encourage the student teacher to delve into an event and explore all aspects of it. Clinical Faculty and student teacher teams learn through deep structure dialogue and metacognition to confer, reflect, plan, construct meanings, set goals, and debate.

Clinical Faculty Perceptions

Virginia Alirez, an elementary teacher for twenty-two years and a supervisor of seven student teachers, became a Clinical Faculty member fall semester of 1992. She shares her views of the program:

> In the past, teachers were cooperating with the university and providing "a room" for the student teachers to practice teaching. The cooperating teachers worked with student teachers, but the university was ultimately responsible for the learning experience and the evaluation. Their progress was monitored with bi-monthly or monthly visits, depending on the university supervisor. There was little contact between the cooperating teacher and the university unless a serious problem arose.
>
> The new Clinical Faculty program includes Collegial Coaching seminars in which teachers discuss ways to better prepare the novice teachers. Through these seminars we are able to make a paradigm shift which is essential in order to focus on an interdependent level and replace the old dependent relationship. By working together, everyone, even the intern teachers, contribute to achieve the greatest success possible. Through this program teachers and intern teachers work collaboratively to achieve the best training possible. This has been my most successful experience.

In summary, the program is a dynamic one in that it is continuously refining and implementing the recommendations of the Clinical Faculty, school administrators, and the student teachers. Thus, the role of the Clinical Faculty has become a strong advisory role. It is a powerful role in that the university and the Clinical Faculty together can continue to effect positive change in the content, system, and processes that

structure the preparation of teachers. In light of the changes in today's schools, from restructuring to the diversity of student populations, it is vital that universities and schools form partnerships to prepare teachers to be reflective and analytical in the teaching role.

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